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JESUS KING AND JUDGE ACCORDING TO JOHN 19:13¹

Ever since Harnack the meaning of *ekathisen* in Jn. 19:13 has been disputed. Are we to take this verb as transitive: 'He (Pilate) made him (Jesus) sit,' or intransitive: 'He (Pilate) sat'? This question is not merely one of grammar. Its importance is far greater than that, for if the verb is transitive, the whole of the last scene in the trial of Jesus before Pilate (19:13-16) is given a new meaning. It is Jesus himself who is seated on the bench when Pilate exclaims: 'Behold your king.'

This new interpretation first appeared when Harnack published fragments of the apocryphal *Gospel of Peter*. In this we read: 'And they made him sit on a judgment seat, saying: "Judge justly, king of Israel"' (v. 7). According to Harnack we ought therefore to take it for granted that John, too, had already understood *ekathisen* transitively. This opinion has been maintained by a number of commentators from the beginning of this century to the present day. But others welcome it with reserve. They think that John was aware of the two meanings, transitive and intransitive, and that whilst directly he stated that it was Pilate who took his seat on the bench, he expressed himself in such a way that the text suggested the other meaning at the same time: to the eyes of faith Jesus was the true judge, a king sitting on his throne. But this latter solution is complicated, and it is hardly in accord with John's use of symbolism. It is therefore improbable and will hardly be retained. It is in its first form that we would like to examine the new interpretation more thoroughly and see whether it is possible to justify as the translation of Jn. 19:13: 'He made Jesus sit on the bench . . . and said to the Jews: Behold your king.'

What are the arguments for and against?

Here are the reasons given in favour of the intransitive sense, viz. 'He (Pilate) sat':

¹ This is a translation by J. O'Hara, of an article which first appeared in French in *Biblica* xli (1960), pp. 217-47. With the kind permission of the author it has been somewhat abbreviated, and the excellent documentation has been practically omitted. Clearly therefore a critical assessment of Fr de la Potterie's interpretation must be made on the basis of the original article and not of this more popular presentation. (Ed.)

(a) *kathizō* in both the LXX and NT is more frequently used intransitively: apropos of John in particular, the only time the word occurs apart from the present place, in 12:14, it is intransitive (cf. 8:2). But to this we may well reply that the transitive use is well attested in the NT (Ac. 2:30; 1 Cor. 6:4; Eph. 1:20) and is therefore equally possible here. Moreover the fact that *kathizō* is only used twice in John (or three times if we include 8:2) weakens the appeal to 12:14.

(b) According to Blinzler¹ *kathizein epi (tou) bēmatos* is almost a technical term for a judge taking his place in court. This is correct, but it still remains true that the word is used transitively in the *Gospel of Peter* and in Justin. Why then should it be impossible for John to use it in the same way?

(c) It has been argued that if the verb were transitive John would have had to follow it with a direct object (He sat *him*) in order to remove the ambiguity. But we shall show that it is in keeping with John's style to omit the direct object after the second of two verbs which both govern it: in this case 'Jesus' governed by both 'brought' and 'sat.'

(d) Final objection: it is quite impossible from the historical point of view that Pilate would have installed Jesus on the bench in front of the Jews. It is inconceivable, they say, that a Roman magistrate should so forget his position as to use his own bench for staging a public mockery. We will come back to this point in the second part.

Here are the reasons put forward until now in favour of the transitive sense, viz. 'He sat (him)':

(a) It gives far greater dramatic force to Pilate's declaration 'Behold your king.'

(b) As we said at the beginning there is a very old tradition (Justin and *Gospel of Peter*) which understands the expression transitively, so that Jesus is mockingly presented as the judge of the Jews.

(c) If it is Pilate who sits on the bench, it can only be to pronounce sentence of condemnation. But in spite of Blinzler,² it is hard to see in 'Behold your king' any real charge which implies a condemnation.

None of these arguments is taken directly from the text: (a) derives from theological considerations; (b) from the history of the interpretation of the Passion story; (c) from the historical context of the trial. It is therefore understandable that many exegetes, concerned primarily with the interpretation of texts, find these reasons insufficient. But it is possible to add new arguments from the text itself, and this time they are strictly philological. We will give them in the first

¹ 'Der Entscheid des Pilatus—Exekutionsbefehl oder Todesurteil?', *MitTZ* v (1954), pp. 171–84 (cf. pp. 176–81); see also the same author's *The Trial of Jesus*, Cork 1959, pp. 237ff.

² cf. J. Blinzler, op. cit., p. 238

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part. In the second we will try to answer the historical difficulties. Then we will show how the interpretation which takes the verb as a transitive is the only one to give coherent sense to the whole context, and bring out the full theological significance.

I THE TRANSITIVE SENSE OF EKATHISEN

1. Bonsirven¹ has already noted one philological argument: the reference to place *eis topon legomenon Lithostrōton*: into (or in?), the place called Lithostrotos, can hardly depend on *ekathisen epi bēmatos*. Rather it must go with *ēgagen* to express the point to which the motion is directed. In this way both actions, 'bring' and 'seat,' more naturally refer to the only direct object mentioned. The usual interpretation, which makes the reference to place depend on *ekathisen* (he sat in the place . . .) can hardly be defended from the grammatical point of view.

True they try to justify it from hellenistic usage, which often has *eis* (into) in place of *en* (in). But not all NT authors adopt this usage. Matthew and Paul preserve the classical distinction between the two prepositions. It is the same with John, as can be seen from a detailed study of all the examples of *eis* in his gospel,² and particularly where the same word *topos* is used. It is quite clear: John distinguishes the two cases perfectly. So in 19:13 *eis ton topon* implies motion and cannot be governed by *ekathisen*, a static verb; it must be linked with *ēgagen*. Now the reference to place at the end of the verse is separated from this verb of motion by the phrase *ekathisen epi bēmatos*; it can only indicate therefore the term of a motion which begins in *ēgagen* and finishes in *ekathisen*. Moreover this construction is found elsewhere in John.³

The two verbs therefore are closely linked and express one action, and a single motion. But this becomes very difficult if *ekathisen* be intransitive: Pilate brings Jesus outside; he himself sits down. In this construction the motion of bringing Jesus stops before Pilate's action of sitting down. But with this interruption in the sentence the construction becomes very harsh if we must still make *eis topon* depend

¹ J. Bonsirven, 'La notation chronologique de Jean 19, 14 aurait-elle un sens symbolique?', *Biblica* xxxiii (1952), p. 512

² M. Zerwick, in *Graecitatis Biblicae Cognitio*, Romae 1944, p. 17 states clearly that apart from Jn. 1:18 one could hardly find a text in St John where *eis* and *en* are used the one for the other. It may even be questioned whether 1:18 is an exception, for 'there can be no doubt that (it) is intended to mean something different from 13:23.' Abbott, *Johannine Grammar*, n. 2308. A difference is also intended between 8:26 and 17:13: 'I speak to the world' and 'I speak, being present in the world.'

³ cf. Jn. 9:7

on *ēgagen*, as grammar requires. On the other hand, if *ekathisen* is transitive, the sentence is carried along in a single continuous movement, for the two verbs govern the same complement placed between them: making Jesus sit completes the action of bringing Jesus outside.

2. The place of the complement *ton Iēsoum* between the two verbs brings us directly to the second argument. It has been claimed that if John were using *ekathisen* in the transitive and causal sense, he would have to add the complement *auton*. This however is to misunderstand John's style, though no-one seems to have pointed it out before. We may explain it like this: when two co-ordinated verbs have a common direct object it is almost always placed *between* the two verbs, and in this case it is not repeated pronominally after the second verb. We have found seventeen examples of this in the fourth gospel, and it is extremely significant that in the majority of these cases there is a variant reading in which the complement is repeated after the second verb: it has been added by copyists who found the shorter text obscure.

In the text we are studying therefore, *ton Iēsoum* is the direct object of *ekathisen* as well as of *ēgagen*. It is the whole of this action of Pilate, begun in the Praetorium, which ends *eis ton topon legomenon Lithostrōton*. Notice moreover that this peculiarity of style is not proper to the author of the fourth gospel. Surprisingly enough, of the three passages in the NT where this verb *kathizō* is unquestionably transitive, two of them have exactly the same construction: Ac. 2:30 (D) and Eph. 1:20. The resemblance between the first of these and Jn. 19:13 is striking. And they both show that the transitive use of *ekathisen* in Jn. 19:13 without the pronoun *auton* following, is no cause for surprise: in fact it is the normal construction. Jn. 19:13, taken transitively, is no more ambiguous than Ac. 2:30 or Eph. 1:20.

3. A final argument in favour of the transitive sense—or rather this time an indication—is that *bēmatos* is used without the article. This small detail is not without significance, as can be seen from the many hellenistic texts containing the word *bēma*. Limiting ourselves here to examples in which the word is preceded by *kathizein* we find that the formula *kathizein epi tou bēmatos*, i.e. with the article, is found in narrative passages speaking of the magistrate taking his place on his bench, namely the well-known and official place where he habitually exercises justice. The formula is used in this way in the NT, in particular of Pilate at Jerusalem (Mt. 27:19), Herod Agrippa at Caesarea (Ac. 12:21), Festus at Caesarea also (Ac. 25:6). But when the formula is used without the article, as in Jn. 19:13, the sense is no longer quite the same. The nuance differs according to context. In narrative passages of which there are several in Josephus, it is always a question

of a temporary tribunal, provisionally set up in this or that place to allow the Roman magistrates to dispense justice on circuit. This is what Pilate did in the stadium at Caesarea (*Bell.* II, 9, 3, s. 172). But in other contexts the absence of the article may have a different nuance: it may draw attention to the character or (juridical) nature of the place in question: a place where justice is dispensed. This latter nuance is particularly pronounced in a passage of Epictetus. In order to lead his disciples to prefer spiritual benefits to the glory of the consulate, the philosopher shows how trivial are the advantages handed out in this political career: 'Twelve fasces, (the right) to sit on the bench (*epi bēma*) three or four times, to sponsor games at the circus etc.' (IV, 10, 21). Clearly it is a question here, not of this or that particular bench, but of the consular bench considered in the abstract, and the judiciary function as such.

From all this it follows clearly that in the formula we are examining the presence or the absence of the article has precisely the sense that grammarians give it in general:

(a) *kathizein epi tou bēmatos* (with the article) describes a concrete action: the judge sits down on his bench (concerned therefore with the ordinary and official bench);

(b) *kathizein epi bēmatos* (without the article) may have two nuances which are not always clearly distinguishable: in factual narratives the article is omitted to express the fact that the judge takes his place on a bench (not the usual one). In other cases the formula stresses the nature of this action (in our case the *juridical* nature of the action): 'to be on the bench' is equivalent to 'to act as judge.' Used transitively the formula would then signify: to install someone as judge.

If we apply this to the passages in Justin and *Gospel of Peter* which are significant for Jn. 19:13, and both of which use the formula without the article, we find in the *Gospel of Peter*: 'And they clothed him in purple, and made him sit on a seat of judgment, saying: "Judge justly, king of Israel."' In Justin, the formula identical with Jn. 19:13 can be understood according to either of the nuances we have just distinguished; we may translate: 'Mocking they made him sit on a bench, and said to him: "Judge us"' (*Apol.* I, 35, 6); this would underline the fact that the *bēma* on which Jesus was installed was not that of the Roman procurator. But we could also understand: 'They made him sit *pro tribunali*,'¹ i.e. made him assume the position of judge (in general).

¹ In the papyri we find the stereotyped formulae *pro bēmatos* and *epi bēmatos*, both equivalent to the Latin *pro tribunali*. Here it is no longer a question of the concrete place to which plaintiff and accused go, but the nature of this place, its judicial character. Hence the absence of the article: a man is 'up before the bench' or hauled 'before the judge.'

All this no doubt seems subtle. But we are bound to indicate that hellenistic texts express different nuances according as they use the formula with or without article, for it is this evidence which now enables us to determine the nuance of the verse in St John.

It seems legitimate to state the following conclusions. First there is a negative conclusion, confirming what we said before : the absence of the article rather suggests that it is not Pilate who sits on the bench. Neither of the nuances met with in the texts where the formula is understood in the intransitive sense applies accurately to the case of the Roman magistrate. If Jn. 19:13 be taken as part of a descriptive narrative, we would expect *epi tou bēματος* as in Mt. 27:19, since it is at the Praetorium, the official residence of the procurator. If we take the expression as a technical and juridical formula (*pro tribunali*) it would seem to be introducing of necessity a judicial act, in this instance the condemnation of Jesus. But it is precisely this which is missing in the verses following : this point we will deal with later.

On the other hand if *ekathisen* has a causal meaning : if therefore Jesus is installed on the *bēma*, then the phrase makes excellent sense. If John uses the formula without the article, as in Justin and the *Gospel of Peter*, to portray Jesus seated on the bench, it is because it was of no importance to him to say that Jesus was installed on the *official* bench. What mattered much more to the evangelist was the *nature* of the place where Jesus was, and the fact that this place was a court. So its meaning hardly leaves room for doubt, even if it is difficult to translate exactly this expression with its precise nuance : when Pilate makes Jesus sit on the *bēma* he makes him take up the position and the function of the judge. Jesus is seated *pro tribunali* : on the bench : the platform on which he is installed is the eloquent symbol of his judiciary power.¹ We will point out later the considerable significance of this conclusion, both exegetically and doctrinally.

The three philological arguments we have given confirm each other, and make it practically certain that *ekathisen* in Jn. 19:13 is transitive. We will see in the third part that the exegesis and theology of this passage give valuable support to this interpretation. But we must first attend to an historical difficulty.

¹ Perhaps this objection may be made : in actual fact the platform where Jesus was put was the same one as usually served for the Roman magistrate, and therefore it is just the same as if *epi tou bēματος* had been used. But as we have already remarked, the same reality may be considered from two different points of view. *pro tou bēματος* : before such and such a bench, is not the same as *pro bēματος* : before the bench in a general sense. Similarly here : if John had wanted to say that Pilate installed Jesus on his own bench, and therefore on the official bench, he would have written *epi tou bēματος*. By omitting the article, he is drawing attention to the character of the place, and the function allotted to Jesus (without Pilate intending it). It hardly matters if, in actual fact, the official platform is used.

II THE HISTORICAL REALITY

It is especially Zahn¹ and Blinzler² who have raised this objection. It is unthinkable, they say, that Pilate should thus have made a mockery of his own sacrosanct symbol of power, the magistrate's seat, *sella curulis*, which the Acts call to *bēma Kaisaros* (20:15).

The objection is based on a misapprehension. They argue as if the *bēma* were the very seat of the magistrate itself, the *sella curulis*, and it is in this way that numerous commentators seem to understand the matter. If this were the sense of the words in our text, there would indeed be some difficulty; for one could not easily see Pilate publicly installing someone condemned to death on the official seat from which he himself administered justice. But the word *bēma* has a wider sense. It designates not the seat, but the semi-circular platform of stone or wood where the magistrate's government seat was placed and where the assessors and clerks took their places. By this very fact the difficulty almost entirely disappears. If Pilate makes Jesus sit on the platform in front of the Praetorium, there is nothing which obliges us to believe that he has made him take a place on the magistrate's seat itself; this is, in fact, somewhat improbable. Any seat would serve. To do the text justice it is sufficient that this seat be found on the platform from which Pilate addressed the Jews and from which he normally pronounced sentence.

Not only does the historical difficulty disappear, but it is the usual interpretation itself which has to answer a serious objection. Blinzler admits that if it is Pilate who takes his place on the bench this can only be in order to pronounce the death sentence.³ But this sentence is not even mentioned in the remainder of the account, as most commentators agree. Does this mean that Pilate, in actual fact, did not pronounce the condemnatory sentence at all? That is another question. The very fact that the *bēma*—a necessary condition for judicial sentences—had been erected in front of the Praetorium makes it likely that there really was a condemnation by the procurator. This condemnation is undoubtedly indicated implicitly in v. 16, 'Then he delivered him to them to be crucified.'

The new opinion of Blinzler seems scarcely defensible.⁴ Accord-

¹ Th. Zahn, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, Leipzig 1921, p. 646, n. 65

² J. Blinzler, op. cit., p. 237, n. 3

³ . . . in order to pass in due form, *e superiori* and publicly, in the presence of accusers and Accused, a verdict at variance with his convictions as judge but which, owing to the threat of the Jews, had become unavoidable.' op. cit., pp. 237-8

⁴ Instead of saying, to register the guilt of the Accused: "He has made himself king of the Jews," he used the ironical words: "Behold, your king!" Hence he pretended to recognise the kingly claim of Jesus, whom he was being obliged to condemn as a political offender by saying in effect: This man guilty of high treason is your king.' op. cit., p. 238

ing to him, the words 'Behold your king,' of v. 14, form part of the judicial sentence expressing the indictment drawn up by Pilate. It would be necessary to see in them the meaning 'this is a man who has passed himself off as king of the Jews.' Then in v. 16 would come the announcement of the punishment for the political crime which had just been pointed out. It might be thought that this interpretation also explains the solemn terms which introduce the scene in vv. 13b-14a, but the whole of this exegesis is forced. If v. 14b forms part of the sentence, how can Pilate still ask in the following verse 'Shall I crucify your king?' This uncertainty on the part of the magistrate clearly shows that at this moment his decision has not yet been taken. The declaration 'Behold your king' which goes before cannot, therefore, form part of the sentence itself; it has an entirely different sense. The fact that the formula of condemnation is not found in the gospel text has been strongly felt by the author of the *Acts of Pilate* (recension B), who adds to the gospel account a condemnation in precise legal form.

The conclusion seems inevitable. The words of v. 14b, 'Behold your king,' do not form part of the sentence of the Roman magistrate and are not to be connected to v. 16. Rather should they be joined to the foregoing verses (13-14a) where the expression *ekathisen epi bēmatos* is found. The two verses 13-14 form a closely knit whole and must be explained together. Let us therefore undertake this explanation from the point of view of the exegesis and the theology of St John.

III EXEGESIS AND DOCTRINAL CONTENT OF THE PASSAGE

The verses we are examining pertain to the final phase of the trial of Jesus before Pilate (19:13-16); by the same token they describe its culminating point. The importance and gravity of the moment are forcibly emphasised by St John. The event occurs in the place called Lithostrotos, in Hebrew Gabbatha. The day, the liturgical setting and the time of the scene are similarly pointed out: 'It was the day of the preparation of the Pasch, about the sixth hour.' If these various circumstances are reported with such insistence, it can only be because the incident which follows holds an unusual significance in the eyes of the evangelist. Most commentators acknowledge this. But more frequently they see the importance of these verses to lie in the fact that in them is recounted the condemnation of Jesus.

But this explanation is improbable, for it forces us to acknowledge an evident flaw in the composition of the text and something really

illogical in the thought. In fact the solemn circumstances of which we have just spoken are the introduction not to Pilate's judicial sentence but to his declaration 'Behold your king.' The condemnation itself only comes at the end of the account in v. 16 (according to the common opinion), and even here it is merely suggested in a more or less indirect and implicit manner. In other words, there is no indication from the way in which the narrative has been composed that this is the point of the account. It is not on this condemnation as such that the attention of the evangelist is concentrated before all else. Thus the paradox is evident: four particular details emphasising the importance of a particular event; but the event itself John does not find necessary to point out clearly.

The error of the usual interpretation probably arises from the fact that it seeks merely to give an historical exegesis. That is to say, without concerning itself with literary problems, it seems solely to concentrate on the reconstruction of Jesus' trial. Because of this it pays attention to scarcely anything except the conclusion of the trial and Pilate's sentence. Hence the title usually given to the verses 'The condemnation of Jesus,' although the text has no mention of this condemnation. The passage is doubtless welcome to historical research, giving as it does four definite circumstances. In addition, the time given seems irreconcilable with that given by Mark (15:25), a fact which has from antiquity allowed historians to exercise all their sagacity in reconciling the two evangelists.

But apart from the exact reconstruction of the historical event, is not the individual interpretation which each author gives to this important also? It is this which allows us to discern which theological implications are contained in the account. To discover them it is necessary to pay attention before all else to the individual vocabulary of the author, to his choice of material, to his methods of composition and to the problem of the arrangement of the different pericopes within the larger units. At this price alone is it possible to discern the intentions of each author and the doctrinal themes which he brings out in his account.

In the present case we shall see that two doctrinal themes are intimately connected: that of the kingship of Jesus and that of judgment.

The Kingship of Jesus

When we examine closely the construction of vv. 13-14 we see that the four circumstances of the scene have been grouped two by two, and underline all that goes before as well as what follows. The first two (concerning the place) are directly related to the verbs *ēgagen*

and *ekathisen*; the other two (the day and the hour), while being separated from these verbs grammatically (*ēn de . . .*), nevertheless refer to them as far as the sense is concerned. The four circumstances thus directly place in relief the words *ekathisen epi bēmatos*. But this expression is itself connected to the phrase 'and he said . . .', which ends the verse beyond the parenthesis of the four circumstances. The act of making Jesus sit on the bench receives its own commentary, so to say, in the words which end v. 14, 'behold your king.' And it is the action by which Pilate makes Jesus sit on the bench, as well as the circumstances of time and place, which gives to this declaration of the procurator a singular importance. It is, therefore, in v. 14b (with 15a) that the true centre of the pericope must be found.

If John alone amongst the evangelists mentions that Jesus was momentarily installed on the bench, it is because this gesture held in his faith a profound symbolic and theological significance. It is necessary to recall how the whole Joannine account of the passion (18:33-19:22) is dominated by the theme of Jesus the king (*basileus*).¹ The term *basileus* appears in it as often as twelve times. The theme of kingship is first broached at the beginning of the first interview with Pilate (18:37, 'are you king of the Jews?') and finishes in the account of the placing on the cross: Jesus' cross is to John like a throne.²

In the trial before Pilate this theological motif develops in four movements. (a) In the first interview with Pilate (18:33-8) Jesus declares that he is a king and explains the true nature of his kingship. (b) In the scene of the outrages (19:2-3) John leaves out several details given in the synoptic accounts, but retains precisely those which serve to emphasise the royal dignity of Jesus: the crown of thorns, the purple garment and the words of the soldiers: 'Hail king of the Jews,' without, however, its being mentioned, as in Matthew, that they were spoken in mockery. (c) In vv. 19:4-7 (the *Ecce Homo* scene), which already anticipate 19:13-16, Jesus is presented to the Jews wearing the royal insignia, the crown and the purple (19:15) and Pilate says to the Jews 'Behold the man,' which probably evokes in the mind of the evangelist the title 'Son of Man.' (d) Lastly, our scene of the *Lithostrotos* (19:13-16), parallel to that of 19:4-7 but not merely equivalent to it; the second is an advance on the first. The 'Behold your king' of v. 14 takes up the 'Behold the man' of v. 5 and synthetises the whole content of this verse. This is the concluding scene of the trial, even from the point of view of the kingship

¹ cf. A. Feuillet, *Introduction à la Bible II*, Tournai 1959, p. 637

² cf. W. Thüsing, *Die Erhöhung und Verherrlichung Jesu im Johannesevangelium*, Münster-Westfalen 1960, p. 31

theme. Pilate makes Jesus sit in front of the Jews and declares to them publicly 'Behold your king.' In John's eyes the words are unconscious prophecy, an official proclamation of the kingship of Jesus.

Jesus judge of the Jews

Yet it is another idea which is directly evoked by the symbolic gesture of Pilate which is described in v. 13. It is necessary to recall here the exact meaning of the expression *ekathisen epi bēmatos* which we have tried to establish above. John does not say that Jesus was installed on a throne (which would be the seat of a king), but that he is seated *pro tribunali*, 'on the bench.' He is therefore before the Jews in the attitude and function of a judge. Two themes are united here: that of Jesus' kingship (proclaimed by Pilate and rejected by the Jews) and that of the judgment of the Jews (symbolised by the magistrate's action, but in fact made real by the Jews themselves). This second theme is no less important than the preceding one and it is the close connection between the two that gives the passage all its importance in the structure of the fourth gospel.

More than once already John has spoken of the judgment of Jesus: 'The Father judges no one, he has given all judgment to the Son' (5:22). It is in his position as Son of Man that Jesus has been constituted sovereign judge (5:27); it is for judgment that he has come into the world (9:39). But it is important to understand clearly the true nature of this judgment of Christ.¹ It is exercised through the attitude of men themselves before the light and the truth. For St John, the judgment lies precisely in the rejecting of the light (3:19). It is because men refuse to believe in the words of Jesus that they are subjected to judgment (5:24). 'He who rejects me and does not receive my word has his judge; the word which I have proclaimed will judge him on the last day' (12:48). Thus the judgment is nothing other than the rejection of the revelation brought by Jesus and the refusal to embrace his word of truth. Such a judgment is already condemnation, the *krisis* is a *katakrisis*; but it is man himself who by his negative choice pronounces his own condemnation.

John must have been forcibly struck by the fact that this theme of judgment had here been evoked by an eloquent symbol. In the final confrontation with the Jews Jesus is their judge, since at this moment they complete their rejection of their King-Messiah. The dramatic power of the scene is heightened by the joining of the themes of judgment and kingship. Jesus has borne witness before men so as to be embraced by them with docility and faith (18:37), and this is to be

¹ On the idea of judgment in the fourth gospel cf. D. Mollat, art. *Jugement* in *Dict. de la Bible Suppl.* IV, 1379-85

the basis of his spiritual kingship. At the end of the trial Pilate openly proclaims the kingship of Christ before the Jews, but they have only one cry, 'Away with him, crucify him !' This is the choice which judges them. One can, therefore, realise how striking is the fact that, *at this precise moment, Jesus, silent before them, faces them as a judge.* He is their judge because they will not have him as their king.

A passage in the scene on Calvary also finds in this way its full meaning. The notice on the cross made known in three languages that Jesus of Nazareth was king of the Jews. John adds that many Jews read this inscription, because the place of crucifixion was close to the town (19:20). Why this detail? One feels that the evangelist is constantly preoccupied by the attitude of the Jews in face of revelation. In this supreme moment of Christ's exaltation on the cross, he seems to imply by v. 20 that the public affirmation of the kingship of Jesus through the inscription on the cross was a last advance made to the Jews, a final opportunity left to them: they read the official proclamation that Jesus was king. But here too a refusal finishes everything; they officially demand that the procurator change the title on the cross.

If vv. 19:13-16 are placed in the whole context of the trial of Jesus, one is struck by the characteristic which appears often in St John and which has been called the 'irony' of the fourth gospel. On the human level Jesus is the accused, the one condemned by men; but on the symbolic level, on the religious plane of the history of salvation, it is in fact Jesus who judges men. Likewise the cross, instrument of torture and shame for Jesus of Nazareth, becomes for the King-Messiah an instrument of salvation and of victory. It is a typical example of those reversals of situation which one so regularly finds in St John.

The Circumstances

In the explanation proposed above, the importance of the scene now appears in all clarity. We are indeed at the climax of the trial. This is why the evangelist has carefully noted all the circumstances of it: the place, the day in the cycle of the Jewish liturgical feasts and the time of that day.

We have then reason to ask whether these different indications of place and time have in John's eyes a symbolic and theological value. Many authors have thought so and indeed it is likely enough. But it is less easy to indicate in a precise way what this symbolism is. That is why this final section necessarily remains somewhat conjectural.

Of the two names, Greek and Aramaic, which designate the place where the scene unfolds, only the second can have been mentioned with a symbolic intention, the word *Gabbatha*. The exact nature of

its etymological derivation is still disputed, but it is certain that the word is related to the root *gab*, and 'denotes in a general way the idea of eminence, height.'¹ There is question, then, of a place called in popular language 'the height,' 'the eminence.' A designation of this kind is certainly in place if it helps to suggest the implications of the event as we have explained it; it is on this 'height' that Pilate publicly proclaims the kingship of Jesus before the Jews.

But the twofold time circumstance is much more important: 'Now it was the day of the preparation of the Pasch about the sixth hour' (v. 16). Let us first of all decide that it seems necessary to take these two indications as a whole, the second being only a further specification of the first. In other words, we need not seek to discover the sense of the sixth hour in general, independently of the Paschal context (e.g. by referring to Jn. 4:6 as does Lightfoot). Here we are concerned only with the sixth hour and its meaning on the day preceding the Pasch, that is, the fourteenth Nisan. On this point we are given precise information by a Jewish text, the 'Treatise on the Pasch' (*Pesahim*) in the Mishna and in the Babylonian Talmud. During the celebration of the Jewish Pasch, no leavened bread could remain in Jewish houses. According to Rabbi Meir (c. 130) it was permissible to eat leavened bread until the fifth hour of the fourteenth Nisan; Rabbi Yehudah allowed it only to the fourth hour. But all agreed that it was necessary to burn all that remained at the beginning of the sixth hour. A similar ruling existed for work. In Galilee all work ceased from the morning of the fourteenth Nisan, but in Judea one was allowed to continue work until noon on the eve of the Pasch. One can see that it was at the sixth hour of the fourteenth Nisan that the observance of the Pasch began at the very latest. Placed in this Jewish cultic context, the expression of John (19:14a) would mean that the moment when Jesus was installed on the *bēma* and Pilate exclaimed 'Behold your king' was the very time when the Jews began to celebrate the Pasch.

In giving this time indication John seems to have had a theological purpose. The Pasch which commenced at that moment was that which was to see the salvation of the world. Two major and complementary things point out the meaning of this in John's eyes: the proclamation of the Messianic Kingship of Jesus and the condemnation of the Jewish people. We are truly at a turning point in the history of salvation.

But is it not rather to the exaltation of Christ on the cross that one should attribute such importance? It seems to us that the two scenes of the Lithostrotos and Golgotha cannot be dissociated. The two are

¹ P. Benoit, 'Pretoire, Lithostrotos et Gabbatha,' *Revue biblique* LIX (1952), p. 548

closely linked to one another ; they develop exactly the same themes and ultimately have the same theological meaning : the proclamation of the kingship of Jesus (by Pilate at the Lithostrotos, by the inscription on the cross at Calvary) and the refusal of the Jews, which constitutes their condemnation (v. 15 at the Praetorium and vv. 20-2 on the cross). The Praetorium episode can be considered as a figurative anticipation of that of Calvary. Jesus is proclaimed king at the Lithostrotos, but he will find his true exaltation on the throne of the cross. Jesus seated on the *bēma* judges the world because the world rejects his kingship ; but it is by the refusal to accept the crucified Messiah that the world will consummate its condemnation. At the Praetorium matters were still at the level of a 'sign,' but on the cross the kingship of Jesus and the judgment of the world have become a definitive reality.

Recent studies have rightly underlined the juridical aspect of the fourth gospel. The whole life of Jesus is unrolled in the framework of a vast trial 'which brings Jesus Christ and the world to grips with one another.' If this is so, one can immediately understand the considerable importance of our passage in the development of this trial, because Jesus is there presented as judge of the Jews. The prologue indicates the dominant theme of the narrative : 'He came unto his own and his own received him not' (1:11). This rejection of the light and truth of Christ constitutes precisely the judgment and the condemnation of the world.

Can one say that for St John this judgment is accomplished at any particular moment in the life of Jesus ? Two texts allow an affirmative reply. Speaking of his elevation on the cross, Christ declared a few days before his passion, 'Now is the judgment (*krisis*) of this world : now the prince of this world is to be cast down' (12:31) ; and at the last supper, 'The prince of this world is condemned' (*kekritai*) (16:11). In these two texts the significance of the 'hour' of Jesus, the hour of his passion and exaltation, is indicated by anticipation. In the theological interpretation of John, the passion, death and glorification of Jesus form an indivisible whole : it is this group of events which Jesus calls his hour, the hour of salvation. This is why, thinking of the judgment of the world, Christ could speak of it as a present reality as early as at the last supper (16:11) and even from the beginning of the week of the passion (12:31). With even greater reason one can understand that during the passion itself the scene of the Lithostrotos can portray the 'judgment' of the world even if this judgment is not in fact accomplished until the cross.

The conclusion of this Praetorium scene, then, appears at the same time as the climax of the 'great trial' which occurs again and again throughout the whole gospel. In this trial it is the Jews who constantly

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represent the world; they are the true adversaries of Christ. The same is true of the Lithostrotos: the real antagonists present are not Jesus and Pilate but Jesus and the Jews. Jesus is represented here as the judge of the Jews, but basically it is the *krisis* of the world which is accomplished. The exceptional importance of the scene of the Lithostrotos is explained by the fact that here is revealed in a figurative way and at the symbolical level that which is to constitute the true meaning of the Cross and of the Pasch of salvation, namely the exaltation of the King-Messiah and the condemnation of the sinful world.

I. DE LA POTTERIE, S.J.

Rome

CHOSEN IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD

When we think about salvation, that is to say, the business of getting to Heaven, of being with God for ever, of being saved, we usually do so in personal terms either of ourselves or of other individuals. This makes the fact of predestination, met with so frequently in the apostolic writings, difficult to understand and it has often to be accepted by Christians simply as a mystery. It is a mystery, of course, but it need not be mystifying, and the purpose of this article is to examine, quite briefly, the part played by baptism in establishing and extending a redeemed community, the Church, in the hope that some light may be shed thereby, on one aspect at least, of a problem which continues to cause anxious thoughts in the minds of many ordinary readers of the Bible.

It is desperately important to each individual soul to be 'found written in the book of life' (Apoc. 20:15), and because this is so it is easy to forget the relationship which exists between all the redeemed, the 'great multitude which no man could number' (Apoc. 7:9). The fact is that the saved belong to a community and are saved as members of it, while the lost do not belong to a community in the same sense and it is as individuals that they are rejected.¹ If salvation is thought of in terms of community, predestination becomes much easier to understand, and many of the difficulties connected with it disappear. Two examples of this communal thinking by the Apostles, selected

¹ This is not meant to imply that those who are ultimately lost, if they belong to the visible Church, are not just as truly members of it on earth as those who are ultimately saved.

from among many, show very clearly that it is the Church that is saved, that is, all those individuals of which it is composed and the position of each separate soul in isolation does not arise.¹

St Paul, bidding farewell to the elders of Ephesus, speaks of 'the church of God, which he hath acquired with his own blood' (Ac. 20:28) and in writing to them refers to '... our inheritance, unto redemption as the chosen people' (Eph. 1:14). St Peter, in a catena of Old Testament quotations, calls the Christian community 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, ... ye who were once not his people but now are the people of God, who once had not found mercy but now have found it' (1 Pet. 2:9-10).

This communal emphasis does not reduce the individual to a mere unit, and to show that this is true we need only to recall St Paul's words, 'I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and delivered himself for me' (Gal. 2:21). An analogy may make the position clearer. If I belong to a group, a family perhaps, or a community, I love the other members of it as individuals because they belong to the group as well as for any lovable qualities that they may happen to possess. In fact, co-membership of the group can make it possible to love the unlovable. This is often startlingly true in the case of parents and children.

Our Lord's discourse on the true vine shows that the Christian does not exist as an isolated individual with regard to his eternal destiny: 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit he cleanseth, that it may bear more fruit. Ye are already clean, because of the word which I have spoken to you; abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, unless ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit, for apart from me ye can do nothing. If anyone abide not in me, he is cast forth as the branch and withereth; and they gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned' (Jn. 15:1-6). It is clear, then, not only that the Christian does not exist in isolation, but that he cannot so exist. He must be a part of the organic whole, whose head is Christ. Severance from that whole means death to the one severed. Thus we can understand how it is that Christians of apostolic times can be referred to so frequently as saints, as being saved, as having been redeemed and even as being

¹ This may appear to be an over-simplification of a very complex problem. The important point is that predestination is not an arbitrary decree by which God makes salvation for some an impossibility. The doctrine of double predestination was condemned at a very early stage in the Church's history.

predestined (Rom. 8:29, 30 ; Eph. 1:5), without thereby implying that the individual Christian cannot be lost. St Paul says of himself, 'but I bruise my body and bring it into subjection, lest haply after being herald to others I myself become disqualified' (1 Cor. 9:27). They were 'baptised into Christ, have put on Christ' (Gal. 3:27), they were 'the body of Christ, and severally his members' (1 Cor. 12:27), and it is, of course, out of the question that a member of Christ could be lost. It is the community which is redeemed and all the members of it ; because they are members of it they are, with it, predestined to salvation ; but if a member separates himself from the body he is rejected. As Christians we are, here and now, redeemed, but, 'let him that thinketh himself to stand look to it lest he fall' (1 Cor. 10:15).

We must now examine the means whereby a branch is grafted into the vine. Baptism is the visible rite, ordained by God (Mt. 28:19) by which the new Christian is admitted to the community predestined to salvation and made one with it, and so one with Christ. It is useful to compare this first step under the new dispensation with the rite of circumcision, also ordained by God (Gen. 17:11), by which a man became part of the Chosen People.

Some of our separated brethren hold the belief that infant baptism is not effective because an infant cannot consciously adhere to Christ. But the older rite was commanded to be performed on the eighth day (Gen. 17:12) and the child was then one of God's people, even though Moses would have to say to the whole of this people, 'Who is on the Lord's side? Come to me' (Ex. 32:26). And there are several references in the New Testament to the baptism of converts with their whole households (Ac. 16:15, 33 ; 18:8 ; 1 Cor. 1:16). This does not suggest the exclusion of children. Just as babies are born, in the course of nature, true human beings though completely dependent and with everything to learn, so they can be reborn of water and the Spirit into the supernatural order, truly members of the new Israel and still completely dependent and with everything to learn about the supernatural order to which they now belong. Not all babies grow up to be good men or women ; nor do all baptised babies grow up to be good Christians.

The other point concerns the difficulty that is encountered in reconciling the undoubted fact that baptism is an ordinance laid upon all mankind by our Lord when he commanded the apostles to 'make disciples of all the nations, baptising them . . .' (Mt. 28:19), with the impossibility for those who have never had the Gospel preached to them of obeying the Divine command. If it is through membership of the Christian community that those who are to be saved find salvation, what are we to think about the fate of those whom the good

news has not reached? Are we to suppose that they have been born in such circumstances because they are *not* to 'be found written in the book of life'?

That the Church is the Ark of Salvation is clear from St Peter's teaching in his first epistle (1 Pet. 3:21), and perhaps even clearer from his sermon, or rather defence, before the high priests, when he said of Jesus, 'And in none other is there salvation. For neither is there another name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved' (Ac. 4:11-12). On the other hand, St Paul, in urging that prayers should be offered on behalf of all men, tells Timothy that 'This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who wisheth all men to be saved and to come to knowledge of truth. For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all men . . .' (1 Tim. 2:3-6).

Without venturing upon the difficult task of attempting to explain how God deals with those souls who remain, in good faith, unbaptised or out of communion with the Church Christ founded, we may fruitfully consider the position of the men and women of Old Testament times who were outside God's people, but not outside His mercy or approval.

Jonas was sent to Nineveh to 'cry against it; for their wickedness has come up before me' (Jon. 1:2), and yet God says of them, 'And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left . . .' (Jon. 4:11). The upright man, God's servant Job, was not an Israelite but a man of Uz to the south of Edom. The holy patriarch Abraham, our spiritual ancestor, gave tithes to Melchisedech, a non-Israelite (Gen. 14:20) and, moreover, himself a figure of Christ (Heb. 6:20). Ruth, who figures in the genealogies of David (Ru. 4:17) and of our Lord (Mt. 1:5), was a Moabite, one of those of whom it was said, 'none belonging to them shall enter the assembly of the Lord for ever' (Deut. 23:3). Our Lord himself, preaching in the synagogue at Nazareth, reminded his hearers that ' . . . many were the widows in Israel in the days of Elias, . . . but unto none of them was Elias sent, save only unto a widow of Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And many were the lepers in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; but not one of them was cleansed, save only Naaman the Syrian' (Lk. 4:25-7). It was on this occasion that his fellow townsmen tried to hurl him down from the precipice because 'they were filled with wrath upon hearing these things' (Lk. 4:28).

Is it now possible, in the light of the inspired texts referred to above, to reconcile the necessity of baptism for salvation with the fact that many souls, through circumstances of time or place, can never know

of its necessity or even that such a rite exists? The easier point of departure is to consider the position of those who lived before the Incarnation.

It is extremely difficult to remember, when considering God's dealings with mankind, that while we (living in time and experiencing change and the succession of events which make up history) find the past completely stable, the future potentially so and the present moment most elusive, God lives in an eternal present. We must, however, bear it constantly in mind because God outside time became man to redeem men, and this had to be at a particular point in human history. This necessarily means that many lived and died before the sacrament of baptism was instituted. If no-one could be saved without actually being baptised, then all who died in those earlier times would necessarily be lost. An echo of this fear is to be found among the Corinthians (1 Cor. 15:29). But we have a most definite assurance that this is not so in the manner in which our Lord refers to the patriarchs. He says, for example, 'There shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves cast forth without' (Lk. 13:28).

This does not imply that anyone can enter the kingdom of God other than by the saving power of Christ, for he came to redeem 'all men,' and 'in none other is there salvation'; he says of Abraham that he 'exulted that he was to see my day; and he saw it, and rejoiced' (Jn. 8:56). It does mean that we do not need to fear for the fate of all the unbaptised who lived under the Old Law, and we can also say that, as some of the passages quoted above show, there were men and women of those times to whom God showed His mercy or approval although they had never entered into the Covenant effected under Moses.

It also points to this: that just as the Israelites were bound to the Covenant and 'Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant' (Gen. 17:14), although God was not thereby precluded from showing mercy to whom He would, so it is with baptism. To enter God's household we must be baptised; it is the only means open to us. But although God has limited us in this way He has not limited Himself.¹ We may remember that when the disciples, asking about a different difficulty, said, 'Who then can be saved?' Jesus replied, 'With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible' (Mt. 19:25, 26). What He can do to overcome circumstances of time He can also do to overcome circumstances of place.

¹ It is salvation that is in question here. To become a member of the Mystical Body, the Church, sacramental baptism is essential.

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In fact these circumstances of place are really circumstances of time because we cannot doubt that ultimately the Gospel will have been preached to every creature. Those who have not heard it have, as it were, lived too soon. They are in the same position as the people of pre-Christian times. Indeed, for them their times *are* pre-Christian times.

If then, as the scriptures show, God has approved some of those who were not under the Old Law, there cannot be any reason to suppose that He will not approve some of those not under the New, although in such cases His approval will always be an 'uncovenanted' act of mercy. This does not at all alter the fact that in every case salvation depends on the saving power of Christ. There is no way into the Divine Presence except through him and with him and in him.

The reverse of this is just as true. Baptism is not a guarantee of salvation for the individual, 'For I would not have you ignorant brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptised in the cloud and in the sea unto the following of Moses, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink (for they drank from the spiritual rock which followed them : and Christ was the rock) ; yet with the most of them God was not well pleased—"they were struck down in the wilderness"' (1 Cor. 10:1-5).

If baptism, then, does not by itself ensure salvation for the individual, nor the lack of it constitute an absolute disqualification, what is its purpose ?

To answer this question we must consider the position that will exist at the end of these 'last times' which began with the coming of the Messias. There is no intention of dealing with the effect of baptism on those receiving it, but only with its place and purpose in the life of the church as a whole.

When the last day comes everyone then living will be committed one way or the other, to Christ or to Satan (cf. Apoc. 20:7-10). At this time there will be no-one left who is a 'good pagan' and no-one who belongs to Christ will be outside the visible church. As God wishes all men to be saved, the Church, by which I mean the supernatural society founded by Christ, ought to be co-terminous with humanity. However, He has given men the freedom to reject Him, and it seems from the Apocalypse that many will do so. Membership of the visible Church does not, as we have seen, make falling away by individuals impossible. Nor do apostasies, however numerous, alter the fact that all the members of the Church are predestined to salvation with it. They are like passengers in a bus : all are certain to

reach the destination—unless they choose to get off, thus breaking their connection with the group and becoming individuals who have decided to go their own way. They may be companions in misfortune, but they are no longer members of a community.

When our Lord taught the multitudes many of those living in the Holy Land heard his teaching directly, though undoubtedly many more did not. The apostles were to continue his work, but belief alone was not enough—‘He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved: he that believeth not shall be condemned’ (Mk. 16:16). Baptism is the rite of initiation by which the believer enters the Christian community and, conversely, the means whereby that community was established and by which it is still being extended. We are living in time and are limited by time; hence it is slow and painful work. Christ’s Church continues Christ’s work of evangelisation and meets, as he did, with misunderstanding, persecution and rejection. But this rejection must be a refusal of belief and not just a lack of opportunity to believe, because ‘How are they to believe in him whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how are men to preach unless they be sent?’ (Rom. 10:14–15).

Baptism, then, is the means whereby the Lord adds to the company day by day those who are being saved (cf. Ac. 2:41, 47), and the process will not be complete until the mission with which he charged his followers has been fulfilled and the Gospel has been preached to the whole creation.

CLARKE TURNER

BIBLE LANDS BY JEEP—II¹

Egypt

The hopeful traveller may be disappointed by his first contact with the ‘mysterious East.’ Its dirt and its noise, its extremes of poverty and wealth, the irresponsibility of its traffic and the excitability of its people—these will almost certainly irritate any but the most phlegmatic, and it is well to be forewarned. Warning is needed particularly that petty officialdom seems to thrive in Mediterranean climates to a degree unsuspected by the untravelled northerner, and that a tight schedule which makes no allowance for it is likely to be disrupted.

¹ The second of three articles offering some practical advice on travel through Bible Lands today, cf. *Scripture* 1961, pp. 88–92

The Arab takes even greater delight than the Latin in red-tape, and it seems to be impossible, at least in Egypt, to travel anywhere without making repeated declarations of identity, possessions and purpose, declarations which have to be stamped, signed, countersigned and more often than not accompanied by a photograph. Tourist agencies may be able to help expedite matters, but they themselves are often victims of their own bureaucracy. Even a relatively simple matter like clearing a car through the customs can take up to three hours at Port Said. *Verb. sap.*

This having been said, tribute should be paid to the courtesy and helpfulness of the ordinary Egyptian. Strangely enough neither the centuries of British colonialism nor the propaganda war which has been waged since the 'Suez Affair' have been able to embitter him, and he continues to welcome the English traveller with disarming kindness. In fact there is only one outcome of the recent trend to nationalism which will cause any direct inconvenience to the traveller: European languages have been removed from almost all signposts. Anyone who does not read Arabic at sight is advised to give a lift to someone who can; there is never any shortage of offers, and he will save himself many hours of frustration.

Land of Goshen

Goshen, the territory assigned to the Israelite settlers in Egypt and the starting point of the Exodus, lies between Port Said and Cairo, in the eastern Delta area. Archaeological sites of the Ramessid period are dotted throughout the area, but the only ones of biblical interest which have been identified with any degree of certainty are the two bond-cities of Pithom and Raamses mentioned in Ex. 1:11. Pithom was probably at Tell el Maskhuta, a tiny village in the Wadi Tumilat about seventeen miles from Ismailiya, half-way on the main road to Bilbeis. The village lies a few hundred yards to the left (south) of the road, on the other side of the freshwater canal which can be crossed at this point by a ferry which gives no advertisement of its existence. The temple buildings discovered here by Naville, with their storehouses for grain, are in a poor state of preservation. More satisfying are the ruins at Qantir and San el Hagar, both of which have been identified with Raamses, the capital which Israelite slave labour built for Rameses II. These lie north of the modern town of Faqus, on roads which are both devious and inadequately signposted. San el Hagar especially would seem to be impossible to find without a guide. The other biblical sites mentioned in the route of the Exodus (Succoth, Etham, Pihahiroth, Migdol and Baalzephon) are altogether too uncertain to make the search for them worth while. The pilgrim

must be content with the general scenes of pastoral life which the region offers in abundance to illustrate Israelite life before the Exodus.

Cairo

The Collège de la Sainte Famille, in the Faggalah district near the railway station, seems to be a favourite rendezvous of biblical scholars passing through Cairo. The French Jesuits (if they still possess the property—in the summer of 1960 they were apprehensive of a takeover bid by the Egyptian Government) are willing to accommodate pilgrims during the school holidays for a minimal charge which can scarcely cover the excellent and abundant food served them, not to mention the remarkable attention paid to their comfort. The College is situated unfortunately close to the main tram terminus whose demonic hooter announcing the departure of the last vehicle at midnight and the first one at crack of dawn takes some getting used to. The summer villa of the Fathers at Heliopolis is near enough to make a visit worth while for anyone interested in its connection with Egyptian history or its more questionable association with the Holy Family's Flight to Egypt.

Cairo offers two centres of interest for the Scripture scholar: the collection in the Egyptian Museum (poorly exhibited, but Tutankhamen's treasure outshines the worst display) and the Gizeh pyramids, whose 45° slopes should be climbed for the view they afford of the sharp cleavage between the 'Black Land' and the 'Red Land.' About ten miles south of Gizeh, and easily reachable either by a desert track or along the Nile, lies the necropolis of Sakkara, whose burial chambers and wall paintings are the finest in this part of Egypt. The journey to Upper Egypt does not really touch on the Israelite Exodus, but the agencies advertise a three- to six-day tour to Karnak and Luxor on very reasonable terms (£10-£18). The traveller should be prepared to suffer considerably from the heat and the dust. At all these monuments, the easiest way to avoid being pestered by the crowd offering to act as dragoman is to adopt one. The information he imparts will be dubious, but usually entertaining.

Sinai Peninsula

Egypt's desert regions are classified as military areas, and anyone who wishes to travel through them must first obtain the necessary permit from the Frontier Administration in Cairo. This applies even to those who wish to pay a harmless visit to the cradles of Christian monasticism in the Wadi Natrun (between Cairo and Alexandria) and

in the Thebaid south of Suez (St Anthony and St Paul). It applies even more obviously to travellers in Sinai, Egypt's frontier with Israel. Permits require a day or two to prepare, and the wise traveller will carry extra passport photographs to avoid even more delay. Since the monasteries are also under ecclesiastical jurisdiction, further permission to visit them is needed from the respective authorities. For St Catherine's, the Archbishop of Sinai must be approached, at 18 Midan al Zaher, Cairo (Tel. 52413). The travel agencies will of course undertake to obtain these documents if the Sinai journey is to be made under their aegis: both the Egyptian Tourist Administration at 5 Adley Street (Tel. 79398) and Varvias Tours (POB 631 Cairo) have considerable practice in matters Sinaitic. Thos. Cook & Son advertise a four-day visit to St Catherine's monastery at £20 per head all found, but personal experience would indicate that the firm has not yet properly recovered from its closure during the 'war.' Anyone who prefers to make his own arrangements will do well to go to the Bel Air Hotel in Suez and get in touch with a Mr Perikles who owns several cars that make the regular run to Mt Sinai, but who is willing to provide a driver-guide for five days for a party that wishes to use its own vehicle. For this service he is liable to demand £25 but will settle for £15.

The construction of the Suez Canal has unfortunately disturbed the geography of the Exodus by draining the shallows which once joined the Bitter Lakes to the Gulf of Suez. The exact point at which the Israelites crossed this 'Sea of Reeds' can no longer be determined, but it cannot have been far from the place a few miles north of Suez where an antiquated chain-ferry now transports vehicles across the fifty yards that separate Egypt from the Sinai peninsula. The crossing is less spectacular than that of Moses, but not devoid of uncertainty: to avoid interruption to the Canal traffic, the ferry plies for only a short time twice a day, and since it can only carry two or three vehicles at a time, a queue of lorries bound for the manganese mines along the Sinai coast can cause considerable delay. From the landing point, a good tarmac road (though sometimes corrugated by drifting sand which has congealed on the surface) hugs the coastline for the seventy-five miles to Abu Zenima. Ayun Musa, a natural oasis about ten miles along this road, cannot be disregarded by anyone travelling in this direction, and suggests a connection either with the bitter disappointment of Marah (Ex. 15:23) or with the refreshing waters of Elim (15:27). At Abu Zenima a Government Rest House is able to accommodate travellers who have taken the evening ferry and wish to spend the night there. It is wise to write or telephone warning of one's arrival.

There is no petrol to be had beyond this point, and extra jerry cans are essential if the round trip of 200 miles to St Catherine's monastery and back is to be effected. The road, too, deteriorates rapidly from this point, and whether the Wadi Mukattab is followed to reach the interior (with its famous Sinaitic inscriptions), or the thirty-mile-long Wadi Feiran farther south (Moses' route is anyone's guess), the track is a treacherous one, alternating between loose and shifting sand and the rock-strewn bed of the wadi, negotiable only in the dry season. The four-wheel-drive and the high-ratio gears of the Land-Rover are invaluable in this sort of country, and a guide absolutely essential. The luxurious oasis of Feiran, the only 'built-up area' in the whole desert, provides a welcome half-way resting-place in this strenuous journey. The headquarters of the sheikh who rules the Sinai bedouins (Jethro?), it lies in the shadows of Jebel Serbal, which rises even higher from its plain than does Jebel Musa (though its height above sea-level is less), and is therefore claimed by a minority to be the Mt Sinai of Scripture. Certainly it was the site of the earliest monastic settlements in the peninsula, and still includes a small hermitage where one of the Sinai monks, Father Gregorios, grows vegetables and grapes for his brethren higher up at St Catherine's, and offers tea to his visitors so that he can practise his English on them. The scenery throughout this part of the journey is at once savage and beautiful beyond description. Fittingly the surface does not allow any great speed, and at least five hours should be allowed to negotiate the stretch between Abu Zenima and St Catherine's monastery.

Mt Sinai

The Greek Orthodox monks of St Catherine's monastery are willing to accommodate pilgrims, as they have been doing for the last millennium and a half, in rooms and dormitories of the monastery or at least (when these are full) within the enclosure of its fortress-like walls. The monastery has long lost the glory of the days when 400 monks lived within its buildings. Today the community numbers twenty, and none of them offers any sort of assurance that, given the chance, they would not put the Codex Sinaiticus in a waste-paper basket again. No attempt is made to observe any sort of recollection, nor to restrain the noise made by pilgrims, car-drivers, servants and the Egyptian soldiers who treat the place as a desert rest-house. But it would be unfair to accuse the monks of running the monastery as a business. Their hospitality is genuine enough, and the offering they ask from each pilgrim of £1 per day is not excessive, since it includes the services of the Moslem servants, who will prepare for the pilgrims whatever food they have brought along (there is none to be bought

at the monastery). It is as well to know this, so that there should be no illusions of saving time and trouble by bringing only tinned foods: experienced pilgrims make no bones about importing steaks, vegetables, fresh fruit and even wine. The monks themselves, isolated as they are, are grateful for any gift of food that may be offered them. Water need not be brought: the monastery has two good wells with an adequate supply. A generator has recently been installed, so that electricity is now available for light and power (razors), though warning is needed that this is switched off when the Guestmaster, Fr Nikophoros, pays his periodic visits to Suez. A room is placed at the disposal of priests who wish to say Mass there, but they must bring their own Mass-kit. The famous library, recently catalogued and re-shelved by American generosity, is mercifully kept under lock and key, though accredited scholars are given access to it.

Jebel Musa, the 8,000-foot mountain which long tradition has identified with the scene of Exodus 3 and 18ff., lies immediately behind the monastery, although hidden from it by its foothills. The three-hour ascent is laborious even when an early start is made to avoid the heat, but it is within the capacity of all. Mountaineering methods are forbidden, and unnecessary. Even camels are provided (by private arrangement with the bedouins encamped at the monastery gates) for those who wish to avoid the fatigue of the first half of the climb. The ascent is regarded as a pilgrimage, and each party must be accompanied by a monk to whom a guide fee of £1 is to be paid. The five- or six-hour ascent of the even higher Jebel Katherine (for a slightly higher fee) affords the best uninterrupted view of Jebel Musa. Mass may be said at the top of either of these mountains by those who carry their kit with them, but in the open air since the Abbot is not willing to allow the chapels to be used for 'heretical services.' The descent from both is rendered shorter (if more wearisome) by a magnificent series of steps cut into the rock at the time of the great pilgrimages.

Edom

The present political situation in the Middle East, where the State of Israel is unrecognised by her neighbours and may be entered only at Jerusalem or from the sea, makes it impossible for the Exodus route to be directly followed after Sinai. A guide might be persuaded to take travellers the further 200 miles to the settlement of the Israelites at Kadesh Barnea (either Ain Qadeis or El Quseima a little farther north, both within a stone's throw from the Israeli border), but the desert tracks here are sketchier than ever, and almost entirely unfrequented. And even from there the modern Moses must return to Suez or Port Said. From Suez (Port Tewfik), if he has timed things

carefully, he may sail by the boat run by Mokattam Lines once a month, vaguely at mid-month, up the Gulf of Aqaba to the few yards of sea frontage maintained there by Jordan, and so rejoin the general direction of the Exodus. Failing this, the only alternative is to take one of the more regular shipping lines that run from Port Said north, past the Israeli coastline, to Beirut in Lebanon (250 miles), whence an overland route of a further 450 miles takes one over the 9,000-foot Lebanese mountains, across a corner of Syria (Damascus), and so down the length of Jordan to rejoin the Exodus route, only in reverse order.

The 280 miles from Aqaba north to Amman is almost entirely desert, and the lack of filling stations makes it again desirable to carry spare jerry-cans of petrol. Frequent police-posts help to give the traveller a sense of security, though he may be irritated by the delay caused in the repeated examination of his papers. The road is reasonably good as far as Maan, but for the rest of the ancient Edomite territory it is frequently little more than a cart track. This is especially true of the more devious but scenic 'lower' road, which seems to follow the Exodus route more closely. Work was in process in 1960 to improve this one link that Amman has with the sea, but it could still often leave the driver with moments of doubt as to whether he was still on the road, and he will feel happier if here also he gives a lift to any of the local Arabs that ask for one. The fantastic Edomite stronghold of Petra lies only a few miles west of Wadi Musa on this lower road, and should by no means be omitted, even though it can only be reached by horses (available at the police-post). Warning is here given that the advertised 'restaurant' at Petra is non-existent. Punon (Num. 33:42) is probably to be identified with Khirbet Feinan, also just west of this road at Dana. The 'brook' Zered marks the southern boundary of Moab, a worthy frontier, the hairpin bends of whose vast cliffs will test both vehicle and driver.

Moab

North of this monumental wadi, which flows into the southern tip of the Dead Sea, the road surface improves, though the Arnon cleft (Wadi Mujib) will again tax the driver's skill. Karak (the biblical Kir Moab), at the half-way stage, has a hospital run by Italian nuns who are only too willing to feed and accommodate the occasional pilgrim passing through. Dibon (Num. 33:45) still exists north of the Arnon as the town of Dibhan, where the Moabite Stone was found. Mount Nebo, the end of Moses' own journey, lies about six miles west of the road at Madaba. It is reached by a recently improved track which needs to rise very little to reach the edge of the Moabite plateau. It offers the expected magnificent panorama, but not without a good

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deal of haze in the summer. A track leads down the side of the plateau to Jericho, but it is more hazardous than any road yet mentioned, and the driver would do better to return to the main road and finish the last stage of his journey via Amman.

The Jordan can nowadays be crossed only by the strangely unimpressive Allenby Bridge. It lies rather to the north of Joshua's presumed crossing point, but this may be approached more closely by the road which has been built from Jericho to the traditional place of Christ's baptism. With Jericho, and the eloquent archaeological site of Tell es Sultan, the story of the Exodus ends.

(to be concluded)

H. J. RICHARDS

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Ware

BOOK REVIEWS

A. Jones, *Unless Some Man Show Me*. Sheed & Ward, London 1961. pp. 162, 6s.

It is with genuine pleasure that we welcome back this old friend, now reissued in modern format as a paper-back.

It is a delight to appreciate again the skill with which thoroughly scientific teaching is conveyed in language that would charm the dust-cover off a Douai. We are carried along so smoothly, with a smile and a song, that it is a real effort to realise that if it were not for the style one would have to use big words to describe this book. It is really an extended essay on hermeneutics. The complete doctrine on inspiration, and the full theory on interpretation, are explained and then exemplified by application to various texts: what the text does not mean, and also what it does mean—the literal sense, the theological sense and even the spiritual sense.

Its very excellence is the only aspect of this book which raises a question in our minds, and makes us view its reissue with mixed feelings. It is so good—so obviously so good—that one must wonder why it has not had a far greater influence, why it has not had the effect one would have every right to expect from it. I suppose part of the answer is that it has in fact had this influence; that there are in fact innumerable students whose eyes were first opened to the possibilities of Sacred Scripture through reading this book; but that this influence is, like the book itself, subtle and discreet.

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In any case, one may hope that its reissue will be an opportunity for an even wider circle of readers to appreciate even more the riches that this little book contains.

L. JOHNSTON

Georges Ausou, *The Word of God*. Tr. Josefa Thornton. B. Herder Book Co., London 1960. pp. 255, 35s.

Abbé Auzou is a professor at the Grand Seminaire at Rouen. He is a specialist who wishes to share the good things of the Bible, which he believes is intended for 'the average reader who takes the time and effort needed to reap the fruit of God's Word.'

The reader he is aiming at is the Christian of ordinary ability who has understood that, of all the reading which he might feel drawn to do, these 'letters from home' which he finds in the Bible are infinitely to be preferred. He sets out to explain how the Father's letters have reached His children and how to read them with an increasing degree of understanding. As an 'average reader' I have tried to judge his book, and it is difficult to give the author his due without seeming to be lavish with uncritical praise. Because this is so, this seems to be the place to speak of disagreement.

No-one who has little time for reading is likely to take up a book of this sort: but it is possible that some may be influenced at second hand, as it were, by the author's insistence on the need for time. He says in his opening pages that 'everyone should realise that if the indispensable time for a direct and personal knowledge of the Bible is habitually denied him, he should feel himself dispensed from *that* knowledge by Providence itself. . . .' A reading of the whole book qualifies this considerably. It is obvious that we cannot all be experts; we cannot even all belong to the ranks of the really well informed. It would be a great pity if anyone were made to feel that, for instance, the three minutes daily which will take one through the New Testament in a year was too little to make such reading worth while. I am thinking of people—such as mothers of young families—who are never secure from interruption.

Throughout the book the author insists on the need for reading the Bible, even without immediate profit, and reading it continually. As understanding increases it should overflow into action: 'The Bible is a book of life, *the* book of *the* life'; it should 'enter into our lives.'

Consequently it is more than a general introduction to Scripture. It is a work-book. In the first part he outlines the history of the

formation of the Bible, what has been and is believed about it, the doctrine of Inspiration, the way in which the Scriptures have been understood from the earliest (Israelite) times to the present century and a brief history of the texts and translations. This is all a prelude to the second part, 'The Language of God.'

This part of the book (pp. 155-255) is modestly described by the author as 'a few glances passing more or less rapidly over the biblical world,' and he disclaims any intention of setting out ready-made what must be done slowly. Every topic taken up is enlarged upon and exemplified by many citations from the Bible, and they must be turned up by the reader himself. These topics include Semitic psychology, the literary forms used by the biblical writers, the biblical vocabulary ('justice,' for example, and 'glory,' which, because of the variety of meanings which they bear, can be so confusing) and a most valuable chapter on 'The Biblical Universe and its Meaning.'

Anyone accustomed to moderately serious reading will be able to use this book profitably. It is excellent for the absolute beginner or one whose Bible reading has been rather haphazard. Those who have advanced some way in their biblical studies will find that its value lies in consolidating what they have already gained. It is a book to buy (although at 35s the price is high), unless it can be borrowed for a really long period.

The translation is well done, and although the English seems to follow the style of the original very closely this in no way detracts from its clarity: it may even have been the means of retaining it.

CLARKE TURNER

Marie Fargues, *The Old Testament*, Selections, Narrative, and Commentary. Tr. Patrick Hepburne-Scott. Darton, Longman and Todd, London 1960. pp. 340.

In recent years we have seen great strides in providing an adequate literature on the Bible for English-speaking Catholics. But while more remains to be done on fairly familiar lines, attention is turning to popularisation in a fresh sense. It is no longer simply a question of making the new information and outlook available, but of encouraging a new potential public to take its first rather nervous steps in personal Bible-reading. Attention is shifting from the utterly fascinating information to be passed on, to the still unfascinated people whose attitudes, assumptions, aspirations, curiosity (if any) can be a perplexing barrier; it is not only a matter of getting people to assimilate the information, but of getting them to *want* to do so. A flair for the

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way unscholarly minds work is becoming as important as scholarly qualifications.

Marie Fargues has chosen as her field one of the most important groups of potential recruits to personal Bible reading, children, perhaps rather young adolescents. While she mentions a possible use of her book in schools, it is primarily the young reader wanting to make his own independent, adventurous approach that she has in view.

She sets about it with great skill, providing selected passages, based in French on an older and a more modern version, a feature reproduced in the English translation, which uses a blend of Douay and Knox with, as in the French, some further modifications to meet the needs of the young. Most of the selections are narrative, but from about the reign of David onwards there are well-chosen passages from Psalms, Prophets and Wisdom books.

These quotations are in large type. In smaller type we have at times summaries of a story or a historical background, at others explanations of points of difficulty. There are seven maps, and a number of intriguing illustrations.

Certainly those boys and girls fortunate enough to browse over this book—at their age browsing can be a more repaying process than formal study—will gain a useful knowledge of all sides of the Old Testament text, and with it an even more useful orientation which should, in later years, make them free of the literature for adults now being steadily provided.

As to the explanations—it may be sheer captiousness which makes me wonder whether, in my young days, I should have relished having my elbow jogged quite so often—though admittedly the jogging is more frequent in the earlier parts of the book, where it is also more needed. But then, Protestant fashion, I was turned loose on the Bible at the age of seven, and I cannot say I regret it! Looking back, however, a better perspective suggests that in those days families felt no need to prepare children for the 'critical' views which later on made such rough going for a young adult. Now that a right orientation in such matters is essential from the start, it is doubtful whether it could be done better, in fewer words, or with a more liberating and stabilising effect. Any family that wants to start its younger members on Bible reading as a leisure occupation, not only a school subject, can hardly do better than hand them over to Marie Fargues.

MARGARET T. MONRO

BOOKS RECEIVED

(*The mention of books in this list neither implies nor precludes
subsequent review*)

Christopher Hollis, *The Church and Economics*. Faith & Fact Book, no. 89. Burns & Oates, London 1961. pp. 111, 8s 6d.

A. M. Carré, O.P., *The Everlasting Priest*. Tr. Ronald Matthews & A. V. Littledale. Geoffrey Chapman, London 1960. pp. 132, 12s 6d.

J. M. Perrin, O.P., *Secular Institutes*. Tr. Roger Capel. Geoffrey Chapman, London 1961. pp. 122, 10s 6d.

Ludwig Eisenhofer, Joseph Lechner, *The Liturgy of the Roman Rite*. Tr. A. J. and E. F. Peeler, ed. H. E. Winstone. Herder, Freiburg & Nelson, Edinburgh 1961. pp. 507, 42s.

Giovanni Battista Montini, *Man's Religious Sense*. Newman Press & Darton, Longman & Todd, London 1961. pp. 47, 4s 6d.

Pierre Benoit, O.P., *Exégèse et Théologie*, 2 vols. Les éditions du Cerf, Paris 1961. pp. xii + 420 & 456. NF 39.

Gaston Courtois, *Before His Face: Meditations for Priests and Religious*, Vol. I. Foreword by Richard Cardinal Cushing. Herder, Freiburg & Nelson, Edinburgh 1961. pp. 349, 36s.

Heinz Schürmann, *Eine dreijährige Perikopenordnung für Sonn- und Festtage*. Patmos-Verlag, Dusseldorf 1961. pp. 20. DM 1.20.

Jacques Leclercq, *Christians in the World*. Tr. Kathleen Pond. Geoffrey Chapman, London 1961. pp. 174, 12s 6d.

Louis Bouyer, *The Word, Church and Sacraments in Protestantism and Catholicism*. Tr. A. V. Littledale. Geoffrey Chapman, London 1961. pp. 80, 10s 6d.

Jacques and Raïssa Maritain, *Liturgy and Contemplation*. Tr. Joseph W. Evans. Geoffrey Chapman, London 1961. pp. 96, 10s 6d.

Jean Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*. Tr. unnamed. Darton, Longman & Todd, London 1961. pp. 372, 42s.

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